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MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS AND PHILOSOPHY

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139

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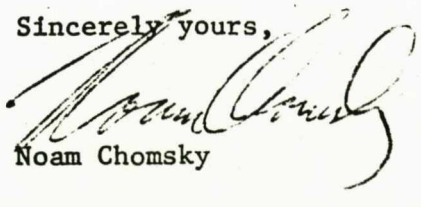
Dear friends,

I have just seen the flyer calling for an International Red Cross relief mission to East Timor. The situation in East Timor is by far the most serious human rights issue facing the United States today, indeed, for the past several years. Since the Indonesian invasion of East Timor in December 1975, evidence has been mounting that massive atrocities have occurred. Tens of thousands of people have been slaughtered, many more have died from starvation and disease. The perpetrators of the massacre are supplied with American arms and receive material and diplomatic support from the United States. The American mass media, apart from occasional Indonesian propaganda handouts, have virtually censored the Indonesian invasion and massacre out of existence. To give one graphic indication, in 1975, when the situation in Portugal and its colonies was a matter of much concern in the West, the New York Times index includes six full columns on Timor. In 1976, when Indonesia has invaded and was perpetrating indescribable atrocities with U.S. support, coverage dropped to half a column. In 1977, when the Indonesian war was reaching a level that some informed observers regard as genocidal, coverage dropped to five lines. This is an American responsibility. It is not necessary to invade Indonesia to stop these atrocities. A mere show of displeasure by the United States, curtailment of the flow of armaments, an end to diplomatic support, might well save the remnants of the people of East Timor from destruction at the hands of those who are using American weapons to destroy them.

Prior to their invasion, the Indonesians ensured that there would be no witnesses. The murder of five Australian journalists prior to the full-scale invasion was a threat that was easily understood. The International Red Cross has been excluded. A United Nations emissary was prevented from reaching the territories--virtually the whole of East Timor--outside of the control of the invading Indonesian army. It is a matter of utmost urgency that the International Red Cross be permitted to undertake relief measures in the regions subjected to Indonesian terror. I hope that your effort will penetrate the barriers of silence and bring the U.S. government to change the policies that have inflicted such torture and suffering on the people of East Timor.

Sincerely yours,



Noam Chomsky